

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A. General:

1. Claim 13 has been amended to delete language added in a prior amendment, in light of Applicants' enclosed declaration and argument below under the §102 rejection.

2. Claims 1 - 12, 17, and 18 having been withdrawn from consideration as the result of the earlier restriction requirement, claims 13 - 16 remain under examination.

B. §102 Rejection:

The Examiner has rejected claims 13 - 16 under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Stemmler et al. (US Patent No. 6,684,682).

Applicants submit herewith a declaration under 37 CFR 1.131 that establishes that Applicants conceived and reduced to practice the invention claimed in claims 13 - 16 before the effective date of the reference Stemmler et al., that is, prior to December 24, 2001. Therefore, Applicants submit that Stemmler et al. is removed as a reference thereby obviating this rejection.

C. Conclusion:

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case for claims 13 - 16.

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FAC:cls

Enclosure: Declaration under 37 CFR 1.131 with Exhibits A - E